

In the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a mask for patterning a semiconductor wafer with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:
- providing a mask blank suitable for patterning, said mask blank comprising including a substrate and an opaque material formed thereon; and
- patterning the opaque material with oval or rounded features using an elliptical-shaped energy beam-beam;
- projecting an energy beam having an elliptical cross-sectional shape onto said mask blank, said elliptical cross-sectional shape defining a long axis and a short axis;
- positioning said long axis of said energy beam at a first angular position with respect to said mask blank and providing relative movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a first portion of said at least one feature; and
- positioning said long axis of said energy beam on said mask blank to a second angular position and providing relative motion movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a second portion of said at least one feature.
2. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, ~~wherein the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to pattern oval features on the wafer~~ said mask blank.
3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising using the mask to fabricate a semiconductor device.

4. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a mask for patterning a semiconductor device with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:

providing a substrate including an opaque material formed thereon;

projecting an energy beam onto said mask to form ~~forming~~ a pattern on the opaque

material, portions of the pattern having stair-step shaped edges; and

projecting and angularly positioning an elliptical-shaped energy beam onto said mask to  
reduce ~~reducing~~ the stair-step shaped edges formed on the opaque material ~~with an elliptical-~~  
~~shaped energy beam.~~

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5. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein forming a pattern comprises forming a pattern having at least one edge having two sides being positioned at substantially right angles to one another to form a substantially right-angle corner, wherein reducing the stair-step shaped edges comprises smoothing the right-angle corners.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 5, wherein said step of projecting an energy beam to form said ~~forming a pattern~~ comprises using a circular-shaped energy beam ~~to form the pattern.~~

7. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to remove the stair-step shaped edges.

8. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein forming a pattern comprises forming oval or rounded features.
9. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein reducing the stair-step shaped edges comprises using a laser or electron energy beam.
10. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, further comprising using the mask to pattern a semiconductor wafer.
11. (Original) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the semiconductor wafer patterned comprises a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) or dynamic random access memory (DRAM) device.
12. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a mask for patterning a semiconductor device with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:
- providing a substrate including made of a transparent material;
  - depositing an opaque material over the substrate;
  - using a substantially circular-shaped energy beam to form a pattern including oval or rounded features on the opaque material, portions of the oval or rounded features including undesired stair-step shaped edges; and
  - at least partially removing the oval or rounded feature stair-step shaped edges with by projecting and angularly positioning an elliptical-shaped energy beam.

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13. (Original) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the oval or rounded features stair-step shaped edges include at least one edge having two sides being positioned at substantially right angles to one another to form a substantially right-angle corner, wherein removing the stair-step shaped edges comprises removing the right-angle corners.

14. (Original) The method according to Claim 13, wherein the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to remove the stair-step shaped edges.

15. (Original) The method according to Claim 14, wherein removing the oval or rounded feature stair-step shaped edges comprises using a laser or electron energy beam.

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16. (Original) The method according to Claim 12, further comprising using the mask to fabricate a semiconductor device.

17. (Original) The method according to Claim 16, wherein the semiconductor device fabricated comprises a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) or dynamic random access memory (DRAM) device.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor wafer;

patterning the semiconductor wafer with a mask, the mask including oval or rounded

features; features formed using an elliptical shaped energy beam.

forming said mask comprising the steps of:

providing a mask blank suitable for patterning said mask blank comprising a substrate and an opaque material formed thereon:

patterning the opaque material with oval or rounded features using an elliptical-shaped energy beam:

projecting an energy beam having an elliptical cross-sectional shape onto said mask blank, said elliptical cross-sectional shape defining a long axis and a short axis;

positioning said long axis of said energy beam at a first angular position with respect to said mask blank and providing relative movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a first portion of said at least one feature; and

positioning said long axis of said energy beam on said mask blank to a second angular position and providing relative motion movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a second portion of said at least one feature.

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19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 19~~18~~, wherein the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to remove the stair-step shaped edges of the mask.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 19~~18~~, wherein removing the stair-step shaped edges of the mask comprises using a laser or electron energy beam.

22. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, further comprising:  
depositing a resist layer on the semiconductor wafer, wherein the mask is used to pattern  
the resist layer.

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23. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, wherein the semiconductor device  
fabricated comprises a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) or dynamic random access  
memory (DRAM) device.

24-28 (Cancelled)

29. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said energy beam remains stationary and said  
mask blank moves.

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30. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said mask blank remains stationary and said  
energy beam moves.